

music, dance, and a resounding spirit of giving, these students demonstrate the power that lies in a love of community and desire to do good. It fills me with inspiration and hope for both their future and ours.

They are movers and shakers in every sense. They are the leaders of today.

Congratulations to the students of Glens Falls on their incredible, remarkable achievement.

Go Bulldogs.

#### RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

(Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the importance of the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Our relationship with Israel is a mutually beneficial partnership that not only reinforces America's moral values and strategic interests, but also promotes peace and stability.

The U.S.-Israel relationship is truly the embodiment of peace through strength. Having served 10 years in the U.S. military, I know how volatile this region is and understand that a key element of our own national security is the strength and security of Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East.

Our two nations face many of the same terrorist threats, the only difference being that Israel is surrounded by hostile regional actors. As malicious regimes like Iran continue their quest for nuclear capabilities, it is imperative that America does not waver in our commitment to strengthen Israel's ability to defend itself.

In a world that grows more dangerous by the day, weakening our allies would have disastrous consequences for the security of our country and threaten the possibility of world peace.

I remain steadfast in my support for Israel and look forward to helping advance U.S.-Israel defense cooperation here in Congress.

#### FENTANYL PREVENTION CAUCUS

(Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, too often, the speeches we make on the floor of this Chamber emphasize our differences and divisions, but this morning I want to highlight and praise an act of bipartisanship, the creation of the Fentanyl Prevention Caucus.

Some of you know my family's story and how lucky we are that our son was not a victim to fentanyl overdose or drug poisoning, but many families have not been so lucky. Too many.

From 2021 to 2022, more than 107,000 people died of overdoses or fentanyl

poisoning. Sixty-seven percent involved synthetic opioids like fentanyl.

Whether we focus on the flow of chemicals from China, the trafficking of drugs over our border or through airports or ports of entry, we must come together to stop this poisoning that is killing our loved ones.

This Congress needs to educate and legislate our way out of this tragedy. I believe this bipartisan caucus can do just that.

I thank my fellow co-chairs, Representatives NEGUSE, ISSA, and CALVERT, for their leadership. Bipartisan work will save lives.

#### RAISING CORPORATE TAX RATE TO 28 PERCENT

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, yesterday, the President's budget proposal was announced. It contains some of the largest tax hikes in American history. If enacted, it would set the corporate tax rate at 28 percent, a higher level than even Communist China.

Combined State and Federal taxes would amount to 32 percent.

This tax burden will primarily fall where?

On American workers and consumers.

It is broadly accepted by economists on the left and right that corporate taxes hurt wage growth, with labor bearing as much as 25 percent of the cost of corporate taxes.

Some estimates even place that burden as high as 70 percent. Raising the corporate tax will hurt American workers, depress their wages, and lower their purchasing power.

This is not a pro-growth or pro-worker budget proposal. It is not even serious.

The President must meet with House Republicans and negotiate in good faith for spending reductions and work toward an actual balanced budget like everyday Americans do in their homes and their businesses.

#### HONORING DANIEL SANTA CRUZ

(Mr. TAKANO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to thank a member of my staff on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs for his invaluable service to our Nation's veterans, this Congress, and our country.

Daniel Santa Cruz joined our committee in 2020 as our digital director. From the outset, he demonstrated an outstanding technical ability and tremendous creative vision. He proved instrumental in helping the committee meet the new digital demands of the COVID-19 pandemic; developed, produced, and directed thousands of hours of compelling video content; created graphical representations of our work

for social media platforms; and captured powerful images of committee members hard at work for America's veterans across the world and in our Nation's Capital.

His charm, humor, and generosity have been infectious, and his commitment to the work of this committee has been incredibly impactful.

The work of my committee, this Congress, and our government to honor and support our veterans was made better by Daniel's service, and he will be deeply missed.

#### HELPING SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS WITH CAPITAL

(Mr. THANEDAR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THANEDAR. Madam Speaker, I stand today to speak about the importance of uplifting small businesses in our country.

About 50 percent of U.S. GDP is generated by small businesses. Despite this, big corporations seem to always rake in big profits during economic hardship, while small businesses struggle to get by.

As a result, small business owners barely have enough leftover funds after payroll to reinvest into their businesses.

As a former small business owner, I know firsthand the difficulties these hardworking men and women face. Today, entrepreneurs, especially women and minorities, find it hard to get access to capital. I am calling for targeted programs to provide access to capital for Black and Brown communities for businesses led by veterans, the disabled, and women across this country.

#### RURAL HOSPITALS HAVE HIT A CRISIS POINT

(Mr. COSTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, we have reached a crisis in our healthcare system across our country. Over 180 hospitals, many of them rural hospitals, have closed nationwide since 2005.

Last month, the only hospital serving adults in Madera County was closed. Hospitals like Kaweah Health in Visalia, California, are sounding the alarm about higher costs and low Medicare reimbursement rates.

What are we talking about here?

We are talking about access to critical healthcare, emergency room services, critical care beds, elective surgery options, and women being able to have a place to give birth safely. We are talking about having access to healthcare in rural areas and throughout the country.

Congress must act now before more hospitals close. We must improve reimbursement rates and address staffing

shortages, nursing shortages, physician shortages.

Hospitals have hit a crisis point. If we do not act now, a nationwide healthcare crisis will be upon us.

My mother once said: "Jim, if you don't have good health, you don't have anything." Every American deserves access to healthcare.

#### COVID-19 ORIGIN ACT OF 2023

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 199, I call up the bill (S. 619) to require the Director of National Intelligence to declassify information relating to the origin of COVID-19, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 199, the bill is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 619

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "COVID-19 Origin Act of 2023".

#### SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) identifying the origin of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is critical for preventing a similar pandemic from occurring in the future;

(2) there is reason to believe the COVID-19 pandemic may have originated at the Wuhan Institute of Virology; and

(3) the Director of National Intelligence should declassify and make available to the public as much information as possible about the origin of COVID-19 so the United States and like-minded countries can—

(A) identify the origin of COVID-19 as expeditiously as possible, and

(B) use that information to take all appropriate measures to prevent a similar pandemic from occurring again.

#### SEC. 3. DECLASSIFICATION OF INFORMATION RELATED TO THE ORIGIN OF COVID-19.

Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of National Intelligence shall—

(1) declassify any and all information relating to potential links between the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the origin of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), including—

(A) activities performed by the Wuhan Institute of Virology with or on behalf of the People's Liberation Army;

(B) coronavirus research or other related activities performed at the Wuhan Institute of Virology prior to the outbreak of COVID-19; and

(C) researchers at the Wuhan Institute of Virology who fell ill in autumn 2019, including for any such researcher—

(i) the researcher's name;

(ii) the researcher's symptoms;

(iii) the date of the onset of the researcher's symptoms;

(iv) the researcher's role at the Wuhan Institute of Virology;

(v) whether the researcher was involved with or exposed to coronavirus research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology;

(vi) whether the researcher visited a hospital while they were ill; and

(vii) a description of any other actions taken by the researcher that may suggest

they were experiencing a serious illness at the time; and

(2) submit to Congress an unclassified report that contains—

(A) all of the information described under paragraph (1); and

(B) only such redactions as the Director determines necessary to protect sources and methods.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. HIMES), each will control 30 minutes.

The chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER).

□ 0915

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and insert into the RECORD extraneous material on S. 619.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of S. 619, a bill that would require the Director of National Intelligence to declassify information relating to the origin of COVID-19. The House companion bill, H.R. 1376, passed unanimously out of the Intelligence Committee.

I thank Ranking Member HIMES for his dedication to bipartisanship and professionalism as we work together to try to ensure that the Intelligence Committee responds to the needs of the House.

Madam Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc across the country, with almost every household feeling its effects. The United States death toll from this virus has surpassed 1 million people.

Although concrete data is hard to lock down, millions of Americans are suffering from the long-term effects directly attributed to this virus.

COVID-19 has also negatively affected our communities, especially our kids. It has become increasingly clear that school-age children face major educational hurdles because of distance learning and long-term school closures.

The American public deserves answers to every aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic, including how this virus was created, and specifically, whether it was a natural occurrence or was the result of a lab-related event.

The House Intelligence Committee which oversees our intelligence community is aware of classified information that could help inform the public why COVID-19 as a lab leak theory is not just a possibility but approaches the idea that it is likely.

The intelligence community does have more information about COVID-19

than the public is led to believe. Much of the information they have can be declassified and disseminated to the public. In fact, the bill we are discussing today would give the American public just a glimpse, albeit a very important aspect, of the classified information the intelligence community holds.

S. 619, if passed by the House and signed into law, would give the American public a unique insight as to what was happening at a biosafety level laboratory in Wuhan, China, in late 2019 and early 2020. This laboratory and who was working there might be the key to unraveling the truth.

For those concerned about declassifying COVID-19 origins information, I can assure you that the intelligence community could release this information while protecting their sources and methods of how it was collected. In fact, I believe that the intelligence community could go further than what is called for in S. 619 and release most of what it knows about COVID origins, but this is a good start.

COVID-19 ranks as one of this century's most important events. No community was spared, and every corner of the world felt its effects. Everyone deserves to know what our intelligence community knows, and S. 619 is the right step in the right direction.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HIMES. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of S. 619, the COVID-19 Origins Act of 2023. Along with my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER), I plan to support this legislation, and I urge the House to pass it. Let me stop now to compliment Chairman TURNER on the efforts he has made narrowly to bring this bill to the floor, but more generally, to make sure that the Intelligence Committee operates in the thoughtful, constructive, and bipartisan manner which it must operate in if we are to protect this Nation's national security.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken the lives of more than 1.1 million Americans, and millions more have died worldwide. The American people want to know as much as we can determine about where this pandemic started and critically how we can be ready for the next deadly disease, which will come.

Determining the precise origins of a pandemic disease with high confidence is challenging under the best of circumstances. In this case, our already difficult task is that much harder because COVID originated in China.

At every juncture, the PRC Government has obfuscated and obstructed legitimate inquiries and investigations into the origins of the disease. China's approach has been deeply irresponsible and dangerous to global public health.

It is against that backdrop that in 2021 President Biden ordered a 90-day sprint by the intelligence community to analyze the origins of the virus. In